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ABSTRACT

This document provides information to those interested in submitting proposals to conduct day-care research or demonstration projects for the Office of Child Development (DHEW). In the first section of the document, the status of research findings in day care is summarized. These findings concern: Auspices, Staff, Physical Facilities, Issues Relating to Children, Day Care Curriculum, Families in Day Care Services, Support Services in Day Care Programs, and Measurement and Evaluation. The second section of the document concerns FY 72 Day Care R&D Priorities and Approaches. Selected areas for research are: Program Quality (Conceptual Analyses, Empirical Studies, and Demonstration Projects); Staff Quality (Conceptual Analyses, Empirical Studies, and Demonstration Projects), Parent Involvement and Effectiveness (the day care program, the family, and the child), Immediate and Long Term Effects of Day Care on Infants, Pre-school Children, Primary and Adolescent Children (Empirical Studies), Impact of Day Care on the Family and Other Social Institutions (Conceptual Analyses and Empirical Studies); and Other Studies of Day Care Characteristics and Effects (Conceptual Analyses, Empirical Studies, and Instructions for Submitting Proposals). (DB)

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December 30, 1971

OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed are the priorities for the Office of Child Development Day Care Research and Demonstration Grants for FY 72. We hope this statement is a sufficiently detailed description of our interests so that you can determine whether our office is the appropriate place for you to submit a proposal for your day care research or demonstration project.

The closing date for receipt of proposals is March 1. This is the only major review of day care proposals anticipated in FY 72. Therefore, if you are interested in submitting an application, we suggest that you write to us promptly, for a grant application package. Included in this package you will find the necessary application forms and a guide which explains the kinds of information required for the OCD grant review process. Unfortunately, staff resources do not permit individual review of informal proposals. Proposals are to be submitted, therefore, in final form ready for review.

Because of the large number of requests we already have received for funds to support the service components of day care programs, we feel that it is important to emphasize that our funds are specifically allocated for research and demonstration projects, that is, programs addressed to specific research questions rather than service programs to which data collection could be attached. We do not have funds to provide service or training. Furthermore, any research or demonstration project which involves services to children or families must document that it will have viability after the research or demonstra- project is over.

We appreciate your interest in this important research area and look forward to receiving your proposals concerning the issues raised in the attached priority statement.

Cordially,

Thelma Zener

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Priorities for Office of Child Development
Day Care Research and Demonstration Grants: FY 72

The belief that the biological mother is the best caretaker for her children has largely determined the form of child rearing in the United States. Recently, however, through various psychological and economic pressures, this belief has been questioned. More and more women have begun assuming alternative social roles and responsibilities and a demand for day care has arisen. Probably related to this social trend is the fact that day care is now being considered a means of welfare reform. It has been estimated that 44% of the women receiving AFDC payments could be employed if child care were available.

The demand for day care services has already overwhelmed the capacity of available delivery, licensing, support and monitoring systems. There are already 12,300,000 children below 14 years of age whose mothers work; 3,800,000 are below six years of age. Of these, 16% do not use day care because their mothers work only during school hours or care for their children on the job; about 47% are cared for in their own homes; 31% are cared for in someone else's home; and 6% are cared for in group day care centers. Thus, the majority of children are cared for in family day care situations where the problems associated with licensing, support and monitoring systems, are especially severe.

The review of on-going and completed research in Day Care (Chapman and Lazar, 1971) and the recommendations made by Day Care program planners (Zener, 1971) indicate that the needs for information about day care are extensive. Much of the current day care for children is provided in private homes by friends or relatives; virtually nothing is known about its quality or effect. Even in public or privately operated centers and in agency-sponsored family day care programs where there is some information available, significant questions about staff qualifications, educational, health and nutritional components, physical facilities, costs, and immediate and longer-range effects on children and families remain unanswered. The status of research findings in day care is summarized in the following section.

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A. Summary of findings from current and completed studies:

1. Auspices. A number of studies have been conducted comparing and evaluating the costs, facilities and staffing patterns of various types of day care programs. The following types of day care have been considered: day care systems, day care centers, agency-sponsored family day care, and non-agency-sponsored family day care (i.e., arrangements are made informally by the working mother and caretaking mother directly). The present studies provide no information about non-agency sponsored family day care or at home care.

2. Staff. The prime importance of staff in determining the quality of day care is well recognized. The current research raises--but leaves virtually unanswered--many important questions about the selection and training of day care workers, assessment of their competency, and provision of in-service supervision. The rate of staff turnover affects both the cost of training workers and the stability of child-worker relationships, but nothing is known about its prevalence or how to maintain optimal turnover levels. Finally, the effectiveness of various staff organization patterns and various staff/staff and staff/child ratios need be studied for licensing purposes as well as for analysis of cost-effective care.

3. Physical Facilities. Three aspects of physical facilities have been considered. Two are gross factors related to the size of the center: 1) size as a function of the number of children served and 2) size as a function of the space available per child. The third aspect concerns the quality and organization of space and equipment. These early studies have raised many questions concerning the relationship between physical facilities and social relationships, program content, and program impact. In another vein, the challenge of designing safe, age appropriate, economic and developmentally stimulating environments has been taken up by several designers and architects. The value of these architecturally innovative approaches needs to be assessed.

4. Issues Relating to Children. There have been a few evaluation studies of day care programs which describe the impact of particular, exceptional programs on children, but the variety of programs and the great number of possible effects make it difficult to draw inferences about the impact of "typical" day care programs on children. The Chapman and Lazar (1971) summary draws special attention to the impact of certain features of day care; e.g., separation from mother, changes within and between programs, mixtures of various ages, social and ethnic groups, and family educational or experiential backgrounds.

The previous studies have tended to assess the effects of day care on children's physical and cognitive development. The more subtle, social-emotional variables, which are probably most directly related to the day care experience, have gone unassessed. This gap in available evidence is probably best attributed to the difficulty of conceptualizing and measuring these variables (e.g., trust, independence, self-concept, achievement motivation, happiness) but the area is a critical one for day care research.

5. Day Care Curriculum. Approaches developed by pre-school programs, infant stimulation programs and day care programs are considered as sources for day care curricula. Television has been recommended as a way of providing a developmental supplement to many family day care homes. These sources are relevant to care for pre-school children; there is also a need to consider types of curriculum programs and ways of providing them for school-age children. After-school care has been grossly neglected and thousands of latch-key children are the result.

6. Families in Day Care Services. Research questions relating to the family and the Day Care program have included:

(a) How families select day care services (consumer information and protection) and how satisfied they are with the services available to them. A particularly important question concerns the congruity between parents' child rearing expectations and those of the day care provider.

(b) Issues of parent involvement in decision-making roles, in staff positions, or in teacher roles as instructors of their own children. Sustaining meaningful involvement for parents without household help, who work from 8 to 5, travel long hours to and from work, and have large families, is an especially difficult problem that has received little research attention.

(c) The role of the extended family in providing day care.

(d) The effects of family geographic mobility on the impact of day care programs.

7. Support Services in Day Care Programs. Support services, including provision of medical, dental and mental health services, nutrition and social service, have been present to some extent in most day care centers and systems. Present and proposed Federal programs have increased the emphasis given to these support programs for low income families. Little is known, however, about

their effectiveness, and virtually nothing has been done to show how the needs of the vast majority of children, those cared for in their own homes or in family day care arrangements, can be assessed and met. Perhaps the single largest need for demonstrations is the provision of comprehensive, cost-effective service to children in the non-licensed, mother-arranged settings.

8. Measurement and Evaluation. The measures used to study day care are far from satisfactory. There are no reliable, simple measures of staff competence, program quality, parent involvement and effectiveness, and child development (especially social-emotional development).

State licensing requirements tend to focus on facilities (e.g., size and number of toilets, compliance with wiring regulations) and the Federal Interagency Day Care Standards are broad statements rather than a uniform code. Few issues generate as much controversy as the objective specification of requirements for program quality and staff competence. Some groups fear these will be used to keep out paraprofessionals; others feel that we would be recklessly giving up the time-tested requirements based on training and experience.

The question of what observable characteristics do distinguish good and poor caretakers, and how the general lists of desirable qualities in personnel and programs can be developed into a reliable, easily administered descriptive system are researchable questions.

While measurement techniques are more varied, more reliable and more conceptually sound now than five years ago, better measures are needed to assess child development, parental influence, caretaker competence, program quality and the economic consequences of day care.

In addition to measurement problems, there are substantial limitations in research design and methodology. Is it possible to design real-world studies without confounding effects associated with the subjects, implementation of the program and the program itself? Or is it possible to assess why some social reform programs succeed and others fail through some alternative research methodology?

B. FY 72 Day Care R&D Priorities and Approaches

In view of the diverse and seemingly equally important gaps in day care research and in view of the methodological problems which abound, the following strategy has been developed for the OCD FY72 day care R&D investment:

--Within the priorities identified, which are quite diverse, approximately forty small one or two year studies will be funded.

The studies will focus on selected specific questions raised in our review of research and program planners needs (Chapman and Lazar; Zener).

--Hopefully by the end of FY73 or earlier, some of the questions will have been answered, methodology will be more adequate, and the research issues more clearly defined.

--A re-assessment early in FY74 will identify these major issues and either through the evolution of projects already underway or new programs, the R&D strategy will shift to approximately 60% large scale (longitudinal, intervention) demonstration projects, 25% smaller, priority area studies, and 15% worthy projects not anticipated in the priority statements.

--These projects, continued over three to five more years, should be sufficient to answer the major questions identified. Except for follow-up efforts, it is likely that day care as an OCD R&D priority would phase out in five to six years. Resources will be needed to disseminate the findings; where possible, the means and scope of the dissemination effort will be developed as part of the original study grant.

The program therefore involves:

FY72	statement of priorities	many small scale studies plus continuations of several large day care projects
FY73	summary of findings	a) few or no new starts b) dissemination of measures and findings
FY74	statement of major priorities	funding shifts to 60% large studies
FY75	--	few or no new starts
FY76	--	few or no new starts
FY77	summary of findings	a) follow-up b) dissemination

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It would be expected that the FY74 selection of major OCD efforts would reflect interagency planning as the priority areas emerge more clearly and also interagency funding of prototype system projects linking day care to other "quality of life" components (e.g., housing, job training, health, transportation).

In selecting the specific projects to be funded, the implications stressed in the review of the current research were considered. Nevertheless, many legitimate research questions could not be included. Studies concerning SES mix, demonstration projects of infant care, and day care for special groups such as migrant workers were omitted because OCD or other agencies already have relatively sizable investments in these areas. Development of curriculum material for pre-school children was omitted for similar reasons; also, a large number of curricula are now or soon will be available (e.g., Parker, in press). Finally, questions specifically concerning training of day care workers were deferred until after the OCD Child Development Associate project is underway.

The selected areas for research are listed below. Some of these questions require thoughtful conceptual analyses. Others can be approached with experimental studies and empirical observations. A few can be addressed by demonstration projects. It is expected that the conceptual papers will cost less than $10,000 and that the empirical and demonstration projects will not exceed $50,000.

I. Program Quality

A. Conceptual Analyses

1. Define the characteristics of quality child care programs for different age groups of children. Can the validity of these indicators be demonstrated with evidence from available socialization research findings?

B. Empirical Studies

1. Develop objective methods by which the content and quality of day care services can be assessed in day care centers and in family day care homes.

2. Survey non-agency sponsored family day care and informal day care arrangements with relatives, friends or neighbors. Data should sample all income groups and include: demographic characteristics of children, families and caretakers, and the quality of care provided (including the relationship between quality of services and licensing status).

3. Survey the existing community resources providing day care for school age children. Such a survey should include information about all income groups, include after-school programs provided by schools, non-profit youth serving agencies, proprietary programs as well as informal arrangements with relatives, friends, and neighbors.

C. Demonstration Projects

1. Demonstrate ways of introducing an educational component into family day care homes.

2. Demonstrate various delivery systems to make available support services of health, nutrition and social services.

3. Demonstrate cost-effective programs of after-school care for children from 6 to 16 years of age.

II. Staff Quality*

A. Conceptual Analyses

1. Identify new ways to recruit and train directors for day care programs.

2. Explore the types of specialists and consultants which could provide support services to day care programs. Examine the feasibility costs, and benefits of using these resources.

B. Empirical Studies

1. Develop widely applicable standards for optimal or desirable staff/child ratios for children of different age groups, for children in different activities and for mixed ages of children. Also, develop optimal standards of administrative-caretaker staff ratios.

2. Assess the effects of staff turnover and discontinuity on psychosocial development. How are normal child/adult modelling, initiative and emotional relationships disrupted by staff turnover? What approaches minimize negative effects for the child? How can the needs of adults for career development and better wages be met without disrupting the one to one child/adult relationship now deemed important for healthy psychological development?

*The importance of training for and assessing the competence of child care workers is a well-recognized research need. It is omitted here, however, to avoid duplicating the work which is being carried out in another OCD project, The Child Development Associate Program.

C. Demonstration Projects

1. Demonstrate cost-effective ways to use youth, retired persons, veterans, part-time professional men and women and other currently under-employed groups to improve the quality of child care services, training and supervision.

2. Demonstrate new ways to identify, recruit, select and train family day care mothers. Included here are whatever outreach methods are necessary to recruit minority group women as day care mothers, and studies of the cost-effectiveness of this approach.

III. Parent Involvement and Effectiveness

Empirical studies which examine the effects of different forms of parent involvement on:

1. The day care program

What forms of parent involvement are effective in influencing the social and cultural continuity of home and day care activities, or in affecting the quality of the program? How can the effectiveness of the limited participation of working mothers be increased?

2. The family

How is parent involvement related to the quality of family life the child experiences, the amount of parental attention and concern he receives? Do parents become involved as teachers of their children?

3. The child

Are there observable social-emotional effects in children associated with parent involvement in day care programs? How do these effects compare to those associated with full-time parental care?

IV. Immediate and Long Term Effects of Day Care on infants, pre-school children, primary and adolescent children

Empirical Studies

1. Conduct a follow-up study of a cross section of children who attended publicly and privately operated day care centers during World War II. A number of such day care centers are still in operation and may have records. Such a follow-up study might examine such

things as rates of marriage and divorce, educational achievement, employment history and stability, health history, and also examine such gross measures of pathology as commitment rates, arrest records, number of automobile and industrial accidents, etc. Such data are available on sub groups within the population and might serve as crude control comparisons.

2. Measure the impact of separation from the mother and of day care in general at various ages. Data on gross effects, as the presence and/or prevalence of conditions such as anaclitic depression, hospitalism, childhood schizophrenia and psychopathic disorders as compared with control groups. Studies to determine the presence and/or prevalence of pathological maturational adaptations within various day care settings as compared with controls. In addition, data on more subtle socio-emotional effects of separation and day care in general.

3. Examine the interaction of the child and the day care mother in the various settings. Explore the relationship between the nature of the child-caregiver relationship and the impact of separation from the mother.

4. Examine the interaction between the quality of care a child receives at home and the quality of day care programs on the social-emotional effects of day care (e.g., a child from a particularly disadvantaged home might show beneficial effects in the same program where a child from an advantaged home would not).

5. Explore the various reasons underlying the mother-child separation and relate these to the effects of "day care" on children. Does it matter whether a mother is forced to work because of economic necessity or chooses working as a preferable way of life?

6. Examine the relationship between day care and child abuse. What forms of abuse can and do occur in day care facilities? Is the incidence of abuse by parents increased or decreased when the child is in a day care program?

7. Examine the economic effects of day care. How many women were able to find employment as a result of having day care services available? Compare the earnings of these women to the costs of the day care provided.

V. Impact of Day Care on the Family and other Social Institutions

A. Conceptual Analyses

1. How can various forms of day care affect and be affected by changes in social welfare institutions, neighborhood services, and community development?

B. Empirical Studies

1. Examine the families involved in day care to estimate possible relationships between day care and such family characteristics as family stability, marriage and divorce, working hours of women, timing of initial pregnancy, and family size.

VI. Other Studies of Day Care Characteristics and Effects

A. Conceptual Analyses

1. Analyze the cost-effectiveness of industry providing day care, considering benefits in areas such as absenteeism, staff turnover, morale. How could industry work with family day care programs?

2. Establish criteria and develop a plan to evaluate the content and quality of support services being provided by day care centers, systems and family day care homes.

B. Empirical Studies

1. Develop procedures for identifying serious pathological conditions in children of various ages which can be incorporated into day care programs. Estimate the effects of instituting these early identification procedures.

2. Examine the effects of a mixed age group on children at different ages. Does it slow the development of older children? Advance development of younger children?

3. Conduct evaluations of currently available materials and procedures for day care programs--considering their appeal to children, health and safety concerns as well as their intended effects (learning experiences, nutritional benefits, etc.).

4. Study the effects of various physical facilities. Study the effects of amount of space on physical and cognitive activities and on social relationships. Develop a data base for setting space requirements. Study the effects of different types of arrangements of space and equipment on physical, cognitive and social activities.

C. Instructions for Submitting Proposals

The closing date for receipt of proposals is March 1. This will be the only review of day care proposals anticipated in FY72. Staff resources do not permit individual review of informal proposals. Proposals are to be submitted therefore in final form ready for review

as a Children's Bureau Grant Application. The proposal should be well-written, clear and well-organized. The proposal should be written by the Principal Investigator, who must have demonstrated research competence. If community or parental consent is required, letters from individuals empowered to commit the community or project to cooperate with and support the project must be submitted with the proposal. Proposals will be sent from the Washington office to appropriate OCD regional offices for review in terms of program content (if any) and feasibility re the community situation.

The proposal itself should include a statement of objectives describing the problem, what is already known, and what will be learned from the proposed effort; a detailed description of the project, showing how the project will speak to the problem and reach its objectives; and a discussion of methodological and other problems, how these will be solved, and a detailed workplan for the study. Attention should be given to research design and inference including a discussion of how the proposed design will permit ascription of effects to treatments (if any), sampling biases, adequacy of sample size, and other issues that would affect the quality of the projects. OCD wishes to have as many questions as possible answered in each project. Researchers who are interested in knowing more about the areas listed here and finding possible ways to combine several questions into one data collection effort are encouraged to request (from Dr. Thelma Zener, OCD) copies of the Chapman and Lazar review of current research needs in day care. Finally, the proposal should anticipate the scope, means and cost of disseminating the findings or product. Publication in journals and submission of interim and final reports should be included but will usually not be sufficient.

Lastly, it must be made clear to all applicants that <u>we cannot award funds to support service projects</u>. Our funds are specifically allocated for research and demonstration grants.

For further information concerning the day care priorities, please write

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All day care proposals should be sent to Dr. Zener.